

SUBJECTS.

tourists of the taluk if the Kuttipuzha canal were improved by deepening it ten feet over a distance of about a furlong. Owing to the present condition of the canal, about 20,000 paraahs of paddy lands were under water from Edavam to Vrishchikam; and if the portion referred to were excavated, all those fields would be saved from floods and the paddy fields on the immediate west of it would also become fertile.

The Member next suggested that Section 23 of the Irrigation Regulation be amended so as to vest in the Tahsildar the power now conferred on the Division Peishkar of starting action in cases of failure of the ryots to contribute cost or labour for irrigation works to be done by joint labour. He said that the amendment was necessary to ensure prompt action being taken in such cases.

Dewan's reply.—The papers about the improvement of the Kuttipuzha canal will be looked into. The suggestion of the Member for amending the Irrigation Regulation is noted.

59. The agricultural difficulties of the Kartikappalli taluk.

Mr. V. Narayanan Unnithan (Member, Kartikappalli taluk) thanked the Dewan warmly, on behalf of the Nair population of the Kartikappalli taluk, for passing the Nair Regulation.

Coming to the subject, he observed that Kartikappalli was a small yet densely peopled taluk. The people of the taluk were mainly agriculturists. More than 50 per cent of the total area of the taluk was under paddy cultivation. Owing to the rapid increase in the population without a corresponding increase in the cultivable lands, the supply of paddy from the taluk did not meet the requirements of the people. Further, the antiquated methods of cultivation and the irregular rains combined to make the failure of crops more regular. The Government were refusing to extend the privilege of remission of land-tax when cultivation failed, already granted to the ryots of South Travancore, to the ryots of North and Central Travancore. The soil was porous and hence there was no facility for retaining water in the tanks. The taluk was situated inland and had therefore to depend upon rain for cultivation. Also, the soil was not fertile. The yield depended entirely upon the application of manure. With the extreme want of communications either by land or by water and with the increase also in the wages of labour, the cost of procuring manure from the neighbouring taluks had considerably increased. Next to paddy, the staple produce of the taluk was cocoanut. He regretted to mention that the cocoanut palms were being infected with some disease. The occasional visits of the Director of Agriculture would have rendered much help to the ryots of the taluk in that respect, but the Director was sorely neglecting the interests of the taluk and had not visited it even once. To improve the present miserable condition of agriculture in the taluk, the Member suggested the following measures :—

(1) A model agricultural and experimental farm should be opened at Haripad, where seeds of different varieties suited to local conditions might be experimented with. Replying to the Dewan, he said that he was ready and willing to place at the disposal of the Director sufficient lands for purposes of experimental cultivation and he was sure that

SUBJECTS

there were other ryots who would be willing to do likewise. The ryots were now familiar with only a few varieties of seeds, and, if a sufficient quantity of them were not, at any time, available, or if by natural causes the cultivation had to be begun later, what the people now did was to await the next season. If the ryots had been taught what other varieties would suit the locality, they could have tried the same on such occasions and saved the loss of a crop.

(2) The condition of the cattle was becoming more and more miserable. To remedy the evil, grounds should be reserved for the grazing of cattle, a Veterinary hospital should be opened at Haripad for the treatment of diseases of cattle, and seed-bulls should be provided for the propagation and improvement of the species. Till grounds were reserved, he said that the needs could be satisfied by the growing of certain varieties of fodder grass, and he requested that the Director should be asked to advise the ryots in the choice of the fodder grass to be cultivated. He also suggested that the strongest bulls of the *local* variety should be chosen as seed-bulls instead of foreign ones.

(3) The agricultural implements now used by the ryots were of the oldest fashion and were quite unsuited to the new methods of cultivation. The plough (Meston) suggested by the Director could not be drawn by the local bulls. He therefore requested that the Director should be asked to go to the place, study local conditions and then advise the ryots in improving their agricultural implements.

(4) The manure now used by the ryots was not found to be effective. He said that the pamphlets of the Director on the subject, published in the Government Gazette, were not accessible to the poor ryots owing to the heavy subscription for the Gazette. He therefore suggested the reduction of the subscription to the Gazette or the free distribution of agricultural pamphlets to the ryots of all the taluks. For the transport of ashes, which was now used as manure, there was no means of communication. The only canal in the taluk, the Thana canal, connecting the Kayankulam backwater with the Pampa river, which could be used for the purpose by the ryots, was dry for over 8 months in the year. The roads were sandy and not cartable. More than 100 paths, by-paths and lanes, and an equal number of canals, had gone out of use by encroachments, reclamation and by being totally silted up. The necessity for the removal of the encroachments was brought to the notice of the Government at the last session and prompt orders were issued to the Tahsildar to remove them. The Member regretted to say that not much had been done in that direction. He suggested that the Tahsildar himself should set about the task, visit the locality, stay there for days together and see that the encroachments were removed one after another and that, to effectively carry out the work, the Tahsildar should be given the powers of a Division Peishkar for dealing with cases under the Land Conservancy Regulation. The Member then described the deplorable condition of the road leading to Thirkunnapuzha and Kayankulam from Karthikapalli and said that they stood in need of immediate attention. The total length of the two roads was only $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles. He also suggested that the village roads under the charge of the Public Works Department be ordered to be improved.

SUBJECTS

by the local authorities and that the ryots might be permitted to plant avenue trees on both sides of the roads to guard against encroachments.

When the Member got to this stage, it was 6 p. m., and the Assembly adjourned for the day, to meet again at 11 a. m. the following day.
